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Arianna Arisi Rota

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Abstract

This essay outlines the most recent outcomes of historical research into the Risorgimento in its global dimension. First, it illustrates how, as part of the transnational turn in history studies, scholars have successfully shown the multiple ways in which the Italian Peninsula and its process of nation building were closely connected to – and affected by – mid-nineteenth-century European, Mediterranean and trans-oceanic dynamics, such as the Crimean war, the transportation and communication revolution and the 1870 Franco-Prussian conflict. The essay goes on to suggest new perspectives for further investigation linked to the study of international mobility in terms of trans-Atlantic exchange of ideas, know-how and expertise, as well as of technological inventions and innovations.

Keywords: *Risorgimento, Nation building, Mediterranean, Military Dimension, Global Mobility and Communications, Modernization*.

Introduction: A Mediterranean Affair

When, after the 1848 revolutionary experience, waves of exiles from the Peninsula were once again scattered across the Mediterranean – among them, on August 28, 1849 a sorrowful Daniele Manin sailing off from Venice to France on board the *Pluton* – a new beginning had to be invented. New visions were needed for the apparently neutralised question of Nation-building down the length of Italy. In the crucial late 1840s, the Prince of Metternich's mistake in expecting to deal with Lombardy and Venetia as he had with Galicia, denying the political and cultural progress made by the liberal elites in the Italian provinces of the Empire, proved how much the prince's view had deteriorated since his lucid analyses of the previous decades[1]. The domino effect starting with the ground-breaking Sicilian case had booted the peninsula into the expanded geography of the «Springtime of the Peoples», thus demonstrating the permeability

[1] Still very useful: A.G. Haas, *Metternich. Reorganization and Nationality 1813-1818. A Story of Foresight and Frustration in the Rebuilding of the Austrian Empire*, Wiesbaden, Steiner, 1963; A. Ara, *Austria e problemi italiani, 1831-1846*, in *L'Italia tra rivoluzioni e riforme 1831-1846. Atti del LVI Congresso di Storia del Risorgimento italiano*, Roma, Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano, 1994, pp. 429-451.

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of post-Napoleonic Italian societies to the progressive ideas of the time: circulating plans and constitutional models, along with underground transnational networks, had given life to a new political awareness galvanized by the perception of Austria being the «barbarian» enemy holding the Italians hostage.

In spite of «neo-absolutism» and the so-called «second Restoration» gripping the Peninsula states, the 1850s were to prove how much the aftermath of the revolution depended on domestic policy-making choices – especially in the case of now-constitutional Piedmont – as well as on changes in geopolitical scenarios, with the rise of the French Second Empire (1853-70) and, even more, the Crimean War of 1853-6. As Joanna Innes has recently put it, «change management after 1848» turned out to be «a series of phase changes terminating the history of several dynastic regimes» such as those ruling in the Peninsula and in Othonian Greece[2]. The Italian path to unification, including Garibaldi's expedition to the South in 1860, was therefore part of a wider setting, to be analysed within the framework of Southern Europe: the Mediterranean proved once more to be an effective laboratory for Italy's fight against absolutism or, better still, for the building of a liberal State.

Recent scholarly work has condensed the efforts of individual and team research into a convincing output, showing just how relevant the Mediterranean was as the (back) stage to Italian Nation-building in terms of political exile, volunteering, and even trade experiences. The seminal approach adopted in the collective volume *Mediterranean Diasporas*, edited in 2016 by Maurizio Isabella and Konstantina Zanou[3], documents how the Mediterranean liberal community grew through acting «as intermediaries between the new imperial peripheries they came from, and their political and intellectual capitals»[4]; Italians among them had been trained to imagine the Italian national problem as linked to the reshaping of different geopolitical areas such as the Balkans. The «compensation theory»[5] supported by Cesare Balbo and by some moderates in the 1840s, was but one piece of evidence, and not even a new one, for the existence of bonds between national questions and the strategic balance of power both inside a Mediterranean Sea, seen as a «British lake», and around it, amid the rising crisis of the Ottoman Empire, the growing ambitions of Tzarist Russia and the Mediterranean ambitions of France, whose colonization of Algeria offered a new hub for Italian exile and military training[6]. This entangled Mediterranean

[2] J. Innes, *Popular Consent and the European Order*, in J. Innes, M. Philp (eds.), *Re-imagining Democracy in the Mediterranean, 1780-1860*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018, p. 296.

[3] M. Isabella, K. Zanou (eds.), *Mediterranean Diasporas. Politics and Ideas in the Long 19th Century*, London, Bloomsbury, 2016. The volume is significantly dedicated to the memory of Christopher A. Bayly.

[4] M. Isabella, *Mediterranean Liberals? Italian Revolutionaries and the Making of a Colonial Sea, c. 1800-30*, in M. Isabella, K. Zanou (eds.), *Mediterranean Diasporas*, cit., p. 78.

[5] According to which an enlargement of the Austrian empire towards the Southern Balkans was to be compensated by release of the Italian territories ruled by Vienna, namely the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia.

[6] Still very useful: E. Michel, *Esuli italiani in Algeria (1815-1861)*, Bologna, Cappelli, 1935. See also F.N. Göhde, *A New Military History of the Italian Risorgimento and Anti-Risorgimento: The Case of «Transnational Soldiers»*, «Modern Italy», 19, 1 (2014), p. 25. Where Algeria is concerned, the experience of Italian exiles in the Foreign Legion offers further evidence of international networks and mobile expertise running throughout the *Risorgimento*.

patriotism, recently analysed by Konstantina Zanou[7], blending with the upcoming approach to Italy's crises as «global territorial crises»[8], provides a fitting introduction to a revisitation of Italian Nation-building in the 1850s-1870s. The perspective is the transnational one successfully established by senior and junior researchers from the academic community, where some promising works are still in progress. The following pages of this article take their cue from some «classic» seminal studies in outlining recent outcomes of historical research and sketching possible perspectives for further investigation.

An «Internationalized Nationalism»

As Cemil Aydin has aptly summed up, the unification of Italy can be labelled a process of «internationalized nationalism»[9]: in the sense that the Peninsula, considered as a microcosm (a kind of *Penisola-mondo* in the Braudelian sense), was powerfully affected and crisscrossed by international movements of ideas and of people, while inner pressures towards unification of its different parts benefited from certain international scenarios contributing unpredictably to reshaping the continental system. While one can hardly accept Aydin's definition of Cavour, a true statesman on a European scale, as an «imperial bureaucrat» (this is the result of global history trying to encompass very different experiences and contexts within a single category), it is nevertheless correct, when one comes to the small and fragile Kingdom of Sardinia, to focus on Camillo Benso in order to understand the main international trajectories behind the accomplishment of Italian Nation-building.

Geopolitics matters. «Genetically» committed to expansion eastwards, in the early 1850s the kingdom and its prime minister Cavour found themselves stuck as far as modernising reforms were concerned, as well as humiliated by Austria seizing the assets of Lombard political refugees, now Piedmontese subjects[10]. When the Vienna system was undermined by the tug-of-war between new and old players, such as Napoleon III and Russia – the right to protect Christian populations in the Holy Land and in the Balkans being at stake – the Concert of Europe came to an end. Escalation in 1853 and 1854, which led to a war nobody wanted but everybody

[7] K. Zanou, *Transnational Patriotism in the Mediterranean, 1800-1850. Stammering the Nation*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 2018.

[8] See Maurizio Isabella's works, namely the overview *Liberalism and Empires in the Mediterranean. The View-Point of the Risorgimento*, in S. Patriarca, L. Riall (eds.), *The Risorgimento Revisited. Nationalism and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Italy*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 232-254 and his forthcoming book on the revolutions of Southern Europe in the 1820s in a global context, Princeton University Press.

[9] C. Aydin, *Regioni e imperi nella storia politica del «lungo Ottocento»*, in S. Conrad, J. Osterhammel, *Verso il mondo moderno 1750-1870*, Torino, Einaudi, 2017 (or. ed.: *Geschichte der Welt. 1750-1870. Wege zur modernen Welt*, Munich, C.H. Beck, 2016), p. 91.

[10] C. Brice (ed.), *Proprieté et politique: exil, séquestres, confiscations dans l'Italie du XIXe siècle/Proprietà e politica: esilio sequestri e confische nel lungo Ottocento italiano*, monographic issue of «Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Italie Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines», 129, 2 (2017). Dealing with the «material side» of the *Risorgimento*, the articles collected are highly informative on sources and cases, and tie the institutional attack on private property to individual, and sometimes transnational, strategies deployed by exiles in protecting their assets. See also C. Brice (ed.), *Exile and the Circulation of Political Practices*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020.

favoured, highlighted the role Austria was bent on to play and, as a consequence, the Italian peninsula came once again under the attentive eye of European cabinets: if Vienna supported Russia, Napoleon III told the Austrian ambassador in Paris, «I will have Italy rising up»[11]. The Italian question, with Piedmont as the only possible interlocutor, thus came permanently into the Great Game of power politics by the side door. No wonder then if, from Paris, Daniele Manin seized the moment to speak openly: «We do not ask Austria to be human and liberal in Italy, which is impossible for her: we ask Austria to leave»[12].

In such a framework, and in order to forestall the possible annexation of Lombardy by Piedmont, the British government asked Turin to send some 12,000 or 15,000 soldiers to support the British and French troops, help the Turks and engage Russia in the strategic Crimean Peninsula via the Black Sea. Count Cavour was quick to bargain with Lord Hudson, the British representative in Turin: let Austria expand in the Southern Balkans and in Crimea, thus containing the pressure from Russia, in exchange for giving up Lombardy and Venetia, so that an enlarged Kingdom of Piedmont might create order in the Peninsula. Even though Austria eventually chose to side with France and Great Britain, and Cavour's acrobatic game failed, the Crimean expedition was to open a new door for Italian Nation-building. Witnessing an unprecedented «total» war, with troops being transported by train and steamboat in a cruel climate and decimated by cholera[13], Piedmontese soldiers and officers wondered why their country had been engaged in a conflict more than two thousand miles from home, in a land covered only with stones and corpses[14]. Costing nearly one million dead in all, the war offered the Piedmontese contingent the opportunity to halt the Russian attack at the river Cernaia and thus receive the Allies' praise. The time had come for the little kingdom to capitalise on this, and invest in the February 1856 peace conference in Paris. The containment of Russian ambitions, the demilitarization of the Black Sea, and the isolation of Austria marked a new expanded European scenario. As the Prussian diplomat Otto von Bismarck would comment (quoted in a seminal work by Heinrich Lutz), the Crimean war might turn into «a good war with Austria in order to expel it from Germany»[15] namely from a German Confederation where the dynamic kingdom of Berlin was ready to claim the leadership.

Although the Paris peace conference on April 8, 1856 would only touch on such domestic crises as the Papal States and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies – which the major powers saw as the true factors destabilising order in the Peninsula –, a new sensibility was emerging. Thus, for instance, Lord Clarendon was moved to declare that Austrian troops in the papal Legations, and French troops in Rome, were not so much protecting but occupying those territories. Such a fresh perception of the Italian question was undoubtedly a knock-on effect from recent

[11] Quoted in A. Viarengo, *Cavour*, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2010, p. 278.
[12] *Ibidem*, p. 279.
[13] O. Figes, *Crimea: The Last Crusade*, London, Allen Lane-Penguin Books, 2010.
[14] E. Bertolé Viale, *Lettere dalla Crimea, 1855-1856*, Roma, Carocci, 2006, p. 111. On memory of the Crimean War see S. Cavicchioli, *Guerra di Crimea: memorie nazionali e processi di democratizzazione*, «Contemporanea», 2 (2021), pp. 177-209.
[15] H. Lutz, *Tra Asburgo e Prussia: la Germania dal 1815 al 1866*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1985 (or. ed.: *Zwischen Habsburg und Preußen: Deutschland 1815-1866*, Munich, Siedler Verlag, 1985), p. 510.

developments brought about at great cost: Russian pressures on the periphery of Europe, and the Crimean war.

In the light of this new scenario came the day of reckoning within the inner circles of Italian democratic exiles where Giuseppe Mazzini was losing ground, while Manin was gaining wider support for his position: agreement to the monarchy on condition it proved to be a unifying factor. In other words, acceptance of the Savoy dynasty but only if committed to establishing a united and independent Italy. «*SE NO, NO*», «if not, no way», was the closing declaration by the former president of the Venetian Republic, thus lighting the way for creation of a «national party» – the forthcoming *Società Nazionale* – designed to manage the transition of regime. Once again, the key to change in the Peninsula lay outside its borders: as Cavour stated in early 1859, following the military alliance agreed upon with Napoleon III and pending an Austrian move (declaration of war), no plans could be made. The gamble was that one single event could change everything on a European scale: this deep awareness of the relationship between inner goals and external factors reminds us how Italian Nation-building was a process integrated «in a more fluid, diverse and cosmopolitan experience», as Oliver Janz and Lucy Riall pointed out when introducing the special 2014 issue of «Modern Italy» on *The Italian Risorgimento: transnational perspectives*[16].

The Military Dimension

The Italian Risorgimento can be fruitfully approached in light of a constant need for a showdown on the battlefield that was persistently denied, so that underground conspiracy took the place of open confrontation. In December 1833 when Austrian emperor, Francis I, spoke of his Italian subjects, his comment that «the Italians are too restless to obey, and too cowardly to revolt openly»[17] gave voice to a deeply rooted prejudice about the military qualities and bravery of the Italian people. No wonder, then, if honour and masculinity entered the discourse on the nation[18], never to leave it again, and spilled over well into the 20th Century with the rhetoric and militarization of society displayed by the Fascist regime[19]. Whenever military defeat came, – as at Custoza and Lissa in 1866 when the newly-born Kingdom of Italy fought as an ally of Prussia against Austria –, it provided a new opportunity for European public opinion to blame the Italians for their lack of military aptitude[20]: luck, not greatness, had been responsible

[16] O. Janz, L. Riall, *Introduction*, «Modern Italy», 19, 1 (2014), special issue: *The Italian Risorgimento: transnational perspectives*, p. 2.

[17] Quoted in F. Arese, *La Lombardia e la politica dell'Austria: un colloquio inedito del Metternich nel 1832*, «Archivio Storico Lombardo», VIII, II (1950), p. 33.

[18] See the seminal works by A.M. Banti, *La nazione del Risorgimento. Parentela, santità e onore alle origini del dell'Italia unita*, Torino, Einaudi, 2000; Id., *L'onore della nazione. Identità sessuali e violenza nel nazionalismo europeo dal XVIII secolo alla Grande Guerra*, Torino, Einaudi, 2005; and also A.M. Banti, M. Mondini, *Da Novara a Custoza: culture militari e discorso nazionale tra Risorgimento e Unità*, in W. Barberis (ed.), *Storia d'Italia*, Annali 18. *Guerra e pace*, Torino, Einaudi, 2002, pp. 415-462.

[19] E. Gentile, *La Grande Italia. The Myth of the Nation in the Twentieth Century*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2009 (or. ed.: *La Grande Italia. Il mito della nazione nel Ventesimo secolo*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2006).

[20] See the masterfully written and documented work by F. Chabod, *Storia della politica estera italiana dal 1870 al 1896*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1951, esp. chapter one.

for the annexation of Lombardy in 1859 and that of Venice and the Venetian inlands in 1866. This lack of glory in arms was to become a kind of obsession with the political establishment – even the moderates of the *Destra storica* – and formed a gloomy horizon in the 1870s and 1880s. Later, in 1896, the colonial defeat at Adwa in Ethiopia marked a new and deep wound in Italian self-esteem, reinforcing international criticism.

The experiences of the 1850s and 1860s testify to the importance of the military factor as a crucial dimension ultimately connecting the cause of Italian Nation-building with the expanded geopolitical and cultural context of the 19th century. As always, a powerful vehicle of expertise and social identity, soldiering and volunteering found a natural setting in the Romantic transnational support for national causes. Starting from the epic Napoleonic era – a time of *permanent* war – men from different backgrounds, nationalities and generations acted worldwide as *passeurs* of military knowledge, political engagement and veiled propaganda[21], giving rise to a long-lasting mindset, steeped in camaraderie and feelings of brotherhood. The powerful two-some «uniform and pay» entered Italian society – and other European societies of the time – at different latitudes (social levels?), and cleared the way for political mobilization and dissent in the post-Napoleonic decades.

Exile[22], more than any other factor, reveals the Risorgimento to have been a transnational movement transforming individual military escapades into a collective political adventure, and making the Italian nation-building process part of a wider Mediterranean-Atlantic liberal enterprise. It was by fighting for what were held to be «holy» causes that «a 'blood brotherhood' among nations» was forged[23]. The narrative and experience of international armed engagement which, in 1849 and in the 1860s, inspired multi-national followers of Giuseppe Garibaldi[24], also proved able to motivate supporters of the Bourbons or the Papacy. Many foreign Catholic volunteers were ready to give their lives for the defence of papal temporal sovereignty.

Mobilization and *mobility* – the main dimensions of our current scholarly approach to Italian nation-building in a wider spatial context[25] – seem therefore perfectly captured by that «paradigm of conflict» which, some ten years ago, inspired Mario Isnenghi and Eva Cecchinato's volume *Fare l'Italia*, devoted to the Risorgimento[26]. A Risorgimento which, including its post-1848 phase, is to be interpreted and understood in the light of a clash between political groups, between institutional and «irregular» fighters and, in the end, between the many voices of winners and losers. War as such has recently been chosen by Carmine Pinto as the category by

[21] W. Bruyère-Ostells, *La Grande Armée de la liberté*, Paris, Tallandier, 2009.

[22] M. Isabella, *Risorgimento in Exile. Italian Émigrés and the Liberal International in the Post-Napoleonic Era*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 2009.

[23] F.N. Göhde, *A New Military History of the Italian Risorgimento*, cit., p. 29. For an updated bibliography on the phenomenon of volunteer fighters see also the references listed.

[24] See now E. Acciai, *Garibaldi's Radical Legacy: Traditions of War Volunteering in Southern Europe (1861-1945)*, London-New York, Routledge, 2021.

[25] I adopted this perspective in my attempted work of synthesis: A. Arisi Rota, *Risorgimento. Un viaggio politico e sentimentale*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2019.

[26] M. Isnenghi (ed.), *Gli italiani in guerra. Conflitti, identità, memorie dal Risorgimento ai giorni nostri*, vol. I, Torino, Utet, 2008; M. Isnenghi, E. Cecchinato (eds.), *Fare l'Italia: unità e disunità nel Risorgimento*, Torino, Utet, 2008.

which to analyse the Southern path to unification and post-unification in those crucial decades, the 1860s and 1870s[27]. *The Mezzogiorno and its protagonists – Italians, supporters of the Bourbons and brigands* is a good example of a political and military laboratory transcending the local dimension, rich with European connections and animated by many divisions intersecting each group involved in the struggle for power or survival[28].

War can therefore be read as the main evidence of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary competition for political change, legitimization and control over territory, a long-term phenomenon on a global scale. On a peninsular scale the most militarily engaged arena was probably the former Southern Kingdom during the 1860s and 1870s. *Rivoluzioni e controrivoluzioni d'Italia (1796-1870). Nuove ricerche di storia politica e culturale* was the significant title of the May 2018 workshop coordinated by Carmine Pinto and Gian Luca Fruci, at which sessions grouped together papers on the transnational circulation of men and ideas, and papers on revolutions, wars and conflicts[29]. The dying Southern Kingdom was the theatre of Garibaldi's rise to legendry[30], both inside and outside the Peninsula: one thinks of Alexandre Dumas as a reporter «embedded» in the expedition. With all its contradictions and tensions, the South still challenges scholars[31] hinting at possible new perspectives extending to the whole Mediterranean and the transatlantic world.

If we adopt the individual perspective of those who, first as exiles, and later on as losers in the domestic conflict, sailed off and left the Peninsula to join new causes – or old causes under new flags –, hitherto uninvestigated perspectives catch the researcher's eye. This is the case, for instance, with the network of «Napoleonic conspirators» that gathered around Giuseppe Bonaparte in the United States from 1815 to 1820; and still more so, of the Italian civil war volunteers in Northern and Southern America, currently being investigated by Alessandro Bonvini[32]. Here we have the Risorgimento's transnational dimension, based on commitment to expertise in warfare and to political propaganda, reaching as far as Latin America and the battle-

[27] C. Pinto, *La guerra per il Mezzogiorno. Italiani, borbonici e briganti 1860-1870*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2019. See also Id., *Crisi globale e conflitti civili. Nuove ricerche e prospettive storiografiche*, «Meridiana. Rivista di storia e scienze sociali», 3 (2013), pp. 9-30.

[28] In this field Silvia Sonetti's research-in-progress on the Bourbon exile and their international networks is especially promising. See S. Sonetti, *La fine delle Due Sicilie nelle cronache della «Gazzetta di Gaeta». Alle origini della causa perduta*, «Il Risorgimento», 1 (2018), pp. 23-55, and Ead., *La guerra per l'indipendenza. Francesco II e le Due Sicilie nel 1860*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2020.

[29] http://www.sissco.it/articoli/rivoluzioni-e-controrivoluzioni-ditalia-1796-1870/.

[30] L. Riall, *Garibaldi. Invention of a Hero*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2007. See also Ead., *Travel, Migration, Exile: Garibaldi's Global Fame*, «Modern Italy», 19, 1 (2014), pp. 41-52. Worth mentioning, too, is the recent biography of Garibaldi's wife, *Anita*, by S. Cavicchioli (Torino, Einaudi, 2018) who investigates the life and memory of a woman too long confined in the General's shadow.

[31] A recent and original account of the case of the Two Sicilies is given by the French scholar P.M. Delpu, *Un autre Risorgimento: la formation du monde liberal dans le royaume des Deux Siciles (1815-1856)*, Roma, Ecole Française de Rome, 2019.

[32] Some anticipations from his post-doctoral research at the European University Institute are to be found in *Il patriottismo risorgimentale nel mondo atlantico, ca. 1790-1870*, «Storica», XXIV, 71 (2018), pp. 85-130, especially section 3, and in his paper *«Hacia una nueva Roma». Colonialismo repubblicano nel Rio della Plata, 1855-1861*, for the «Cantieri di Storia Sissco» 10th edition, Modena, September 18-20, 2019. See now the monograph *Risorgimento atlantico. I patrioti italiani e la lotta internazionale per le libertà*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2022.

fields of the Civil War in the 1860s. London as a hub for connecting and clearing supporters (as a hub and clearing house, connecting supporters), Napoleon as a long-lasting icon of martyrdom, and the Republican creed exported from the failed European struggle to the American continent, all document linkages between the Italian experience and a world scenario of political/institutional change and modernization by means of civil war.

In this sense, scholarly research is increasingly benefiting from abundant police[33] and consular sources[34]. These are of great use to analysts of the movements, itineraries and circles of «subversives» and veterans scattered around the Mediterranean and even Atlantic ports, in a global transfer of ideas, political nostalgia and projects for revival. Practices of international policing and surveillance reached as far afield as Constantinople, Patras and Athens, and even Rio de Janeiro, by means of consular instructions and networks. The institutional approach to post-1848 flows of Risorgimento exiles and, in the Southern case, to post-1860 flows, therefore offers good opportunities for comparative analysis and cutting edge research in a global perspective.

Rethinking the Road to Modernization

When focusing on ports and consular networks, scholarly investigation has naturally probed the mid-nineteenth century revolution in communication and transportation. As a result, fresh attention has been paid to the connection between economic modernization and Nation-building. Within this framework, recent studies have shown how Italy, both in its Northern and Southern arenas[35], experienced spurs for change and forms of resistance not so different from those of other regions of the world in that same time-span. This is particularly true if we again consider the microcosm of the Kingdom of Sardinia and its advanced modernizing elite –represented in Turin by Cavour, initially secretary of Commerce and the Navy, then of Finance and finally prime minister.

As Marco Mariano has shown in his analysis of a Genoa-based system of transatlantic steamship navigation – supported by the Sardinian consul in Philadelphia as early as 1834 – the steamboat revolution had been affecting the Mediterranean area since the 1830s[36]: in the

[33] See notably Laura Di Fiore's works on the Bourbon political police and intelligence service; these include *Gli invisibili. Polizia politica e agenti segreti nell'Ottocento borbonico*, Napoli, Federico II University Press, 2018.

[34] Some highly useful research here is the collective *I servizi consolari italiani e il lungo Risorgimento (fine XVIII sec.-XX sec.)*, directed by M. Aglietti, M. Grenet, F. Jesné, Roma, Ecole Française de Rome, 2020.

[35] For a transnational and translocal approach to the North-South divide in the unification years, stressing the coexistence of progressive and reactionary in the *Mezzogiorno*, see M. Meriggi, *Legitimism, Liberalism and Nationalism: The Nature of the Relationship Between North and South in Italian Unification*, «Modern Italy», 19, 1 (2014), pp. 69-79. A comparison between the US Southern agrarian identity and the Italian South is the subject of the beautiful recent work by E. Dal Lago, *Civil War and Agrarian Unrest. The Confederate South and Southern Italy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018. See also A. Del Monte, *Il Mezzogiorno d'Italia e il Sud degli Stati Uniti*, Soveria Mannelli, Rubbettino, 2019.

[36] M. Mariano, *«Un pont sur l'Atlantique». Transatlantic Steamers and Nation Building in the Kingdom of Sardinia (1830-1859)*, «Contemporanea», 2 (2018), pp. 153-172. Actually, the first entirely steam-powered Atlantic crossing took place in 1836 (J. Osterhammel, *Gerarchie e relazioni. Aspetti di una storia sociale globale*, in S. Conrad, J. Osterhammel (eds.), *Verso il mondo moderno*, cit., pp. 903-905).

1850s, together with railroads, it was to re-orient «mental maps inside and outside political and economic institutions in Turin and Genoa»[37]. The Atlantic Ocean and America itself thus began to be viewed as spaces of opportunity in terms of economic modernization fuelling nation-building, in contrast with the first phase of the Risorgimento when America was considered a barbarian land suitable for deporting political prisoners to[38]. What had changed? Some members of the Genoese business community were influenced by the debate on free-trade and growing flows of economic migration, embracing Switzerland and Germany (while in the 1850s some 30,000 Sardinian subjects travelled to the Americas[39]), not to mention the moderates' view, fed by journalistic enterprises known as «*cognizioni utili*» (useful knowledge)[40]. These Genoese entrepreneurs thus became aware of the opportunity represented by transatlantic steamship navigation, a private enterprise which stood in need of financial support from the government in Turin. Meanwhile, in the United States the perception of Piedmont and its prospective geopolitical role in the Peninsula and in Europe was changing. New York's influential press was presenting the kingdom as the only champion of stability and prosperity in an Italian arena dominated by tyranny and backwardness. Within this framework, Genoa as «a sort of Mediterranean Liverpool»[41] became the «dream», giving rise in 1853 to the Piedmontese *Compagnia Transatlantica* which, in its short and troubled life (it was liquidated in 1859) proved how, for a small but modernizing Italian State, power and prestige could also travel along the new routes taken by goods and people. Before the Crimean shock of the mid-50s restored war and diplomacy as the primary dimensions of international competition, a world with shortened distances was able to attract that Italy-in-the-making into the dynamics of an expanded Mediterranean Sea merging into the Atlantic Ocean.

Enrico Dal Lago, who has fruitfully specialised in comparative analysis of the Americas and Italy in the 19th century, especially the parallel stories of agrarian and reforming elites[42], has recently focused on the links between the communications revolution of the late 1860s, the transformation of nationalism and the rise of empires[43]. In his view, the age which

[37] *Ibidem*, p. 155.

[38] On the subject of political prisoners see the last section of this article. On the influence of the United States in the intellectual and cultural experience of the Risorgimento see A. Korner, *America in Italy: The United States in the Political Thought and Imagination of the Risorgimento, 1763-1865*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2017, and the debate over this book published in «Società e Storia», 168 (2020), in part. G. Varouxakis, *Italian History and the Core-Periphery Distinction*, pp. 375-380.

[39] *Ibidem*, p. 169.

[40] Still very useful is K.R. Greenfield, *Economics and Liberalism in the Risorgimento: A Study of Nationalism in Lombardy 1814-1848*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1934 (Ital. ed.: *Economia e liberalismo nel Risorgimento. Il movimento nazionale in Lombardia dal 1814 al 1848*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 1985). For an inspiring case-study on the interaction between economic and ideological factors behind patriotic engagement in the 1850s see also M. Bertolotti, *Le complicazioni della vita. Storie del Risorgimento*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1998.

[41] M. Mariano, *«Un pont sur l'Atlantique»*, cit., p. 169.

[42] Besides the aforementioned 2018 volume, see E. Dal Lago, *Agrarian Elites: American Slaveholders and Southern Italian Landowners, 1815-1861*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2005; Id., *The Age of Lincoln and Cavour: Comparative Perspectives on Nineteenth-Century American and Italian Nation-Building*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2015; Id., *William Lloyd Garrison and Giuseppe Mazzini: Abolition, Democracy and Radical Reform*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 2013.

[43] Id., *Railroads, Cables, Canals, and Colonies. The Shrinking of the World, the Transformation of Nationalism, and the Rise of Empires in the Late 1860s-Early 1870s*, «Memoria e ricerca», 1 (2020),

opened with the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in the United States, the eventually successful Atlantic Telegraph Cable and the inauguration of the Suez Canal, marked a shift from progressive nationalism to progressive imperialism. The Italian constitutional monarchy was not a mere spectator in this scenario: as had happened with steamship navigation in the previous decade, we have signs of some figures being attentive players in the geo-politically expanded game. Among the big enterprises was the construction of the Suez Canal which, for evident geographical reasons, engaged Italian capital, visions and hopes. Starting with visionary investors in Ferdinand de Lesseps' company, such as the Venetian – but Trieste-based – Pasquale Revoltella, a man who matched loyalty to the Habsburgs with business and financial modernizing efforts, many were fascinated by the strategic implications of that artificial passage. Running to a length of almost 200 km from Port Said to Suez, it would directly connect the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, and according to senator Luigi Torelli's translation from maritime miles, saving some 13,000 km if compared to circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope, and cutting 30 days off the journey from the port of Genoa. Ruggero Bonghi, a moderate who followed the infrastructural developments of the time with great interest, wrote in the journal «Nuova Antologia» that the Suez endeavour would multiply goods exchanges but also spread civilization and the uses of wealth[44].

Mixed feelings of pride and ambition galvanized the politicians and commentators: the most challenging portion of the canal, the El Guisir trench, had been excavated under supervision by an engineer from Turin, Edoardo Gioia, who had introduced a new kind of hydraulic dredge, while many other Italian engineers had taken part in the enterprise. Gioia himself would later become a member of the international Commission for navigation in the Canal[45]. In Italian public discourse the new scenario would revive Italian vitality, sapped by sloth during the long

special issue on *Social Fear and Institutional Drifts, Late 19th-Early 20th Century*, edited by A. Arisi Rota, C. Bon. The article is an expanded version of the keynote lecture given at the international workshop *1869 and Beyond: Political and Institutional Crises between the Late 19th and the Early 20th Century*, Milano, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, November 30-December 1, 2018.

[44] R. Bonghi, *L'Apertura del Canale di Suez*, «Nuova Antologia», 1869, pp. 773-785. At the 150th anniversary of the inauguration of the Suez Canal a two-day international conference was devoted to the Italian role in a global perspective and long term: *Italy and the Suez Canal. A Global History, from Mid-19th Century to the Present*, Torino, Accademia delle Scienze, May 23-24, 2019, https://www.accademiadellescienze.it/attivita/iniziative-culturali/canale-suez-05-2019 (last access: August 5, 2019). For an overview of Italian politics and the Suez Canal see now A. Giuntini, *Il Canale di Suez e l'Italia (1856-1869)*, Pisa, Pacini, 2021.

[45] The injection of Italian know-how into the enterprise and the attention of cultivated public opinion are documented by mushrooming publications of the day. For private correspondence on the subject see A. Monti (ed.), *Gli italiani e il Canale di Suez: lettere inedite di P. Paleocapa, L. Torelli, E. Gioia*, Roma, Vittoriano, 1937. Among works of that time see P.L. Barzellotti, *La questione commerciale d'Oriente, l'Italia e il Canale di Suez*, Firenze, Botta, 1869; G. Cegani, *Il canale di Suez: lezione tenuta nell'istituto industriale di Venezia*, Milano, Treves, 1869; C. Correnti, *Sull'istmo di Suez e sul commercio orientale: memoria bibliografica*, Firenze, Stab. Civelli, 1869. On contemporary communications engaging Italian know-how see B. Caizzi, *Suez e San Gottardo*, Milano, Cisalpino, 1985 and N. Montel, *Le chantier du canal de Suez (1859-1869). Une histoire des pratiques techniques*, Paris, Presse de l'Ecole nationale des Ponts et Chaussés, 1999. In September 1869 the illustrated magazine «L'Emporio pittoresco» dedicated a long article to the excavation sites and techniques with drawings designed to inform the broad Italian urban literate audience («L'Emporio pittoresco», September 12-18, 1869).

foreign domination[46], awakening hopes of new greatness. Such a narrative would also pave the young unified Italy's way from nationalism to imperialism, given that the quest for «a place under the sun» was a temptation the *Sinistra storica* would not resist[47]. It was, in fact part of the commercial operations promoted to mark the Canal opening that the Genoese shipowner Rubattino bought the Assab Bay, by the Red Sea, thus inaugurating Italy's colonial adventure. Actually, as early as 1857 Rubattino had grasped the revolutionary and disruptive impact of the Canal and had supported plans for new routes taking Italian commercial navigation towards the East Indies. He promoted an agreement with the Italian government, which would invest some 4 million lire, interest free, in the enterprise. Among the strongest supporters of the deal in Parliament was the MP Nino Bixio, a Garibaldian officer who was all in favour of maritime expansion. As a result, from November 1869 onward regular lines connecting Alexandria and Genoa would be working three times a week. No wonder, then, if the business community of Venice soon complained about being excluded from plans for further expansion of Italian navigation towards the Egyptian ports[48]: expectations and hopes nurtured during the Austrian domination were thus to be disappointed as soon as a global change in maritime traffic opened up new opportunities for the Kingdom of Italy.

The Red Sea and Indian Ocean also meant the Pacific Ocean. Since the 1860s steamboats had been plying as far as the Pacific Ocean with passengers and mail[49]. The newly born Kingdom of Italy was soon to take part in the diplomacy of trade inaugurated in the Far East by the United States in 1853 when commodore Matthew C. Perry forced the Japanese empire to open its ports to foreign ships. Around the mid-1860s, a severe crisis in the Italian silk industry due to an epidemic afflicting silkworms provided an opportunity for a diplomatic and scientific mission to Japan and China in order to negotiate treaties of friendship and commerce, the goal being to secure fresh and good-quality silkworms to revitalise Italian production. The enterprise of the steam corvette *Magenta* – significantly named after the battlefield where victory was won over the Austrians in June 1859 – with a Savoyard commodore invested with diplomatic credentials as its commander, and zoologist Filippo De Filippi from Pavia University with his team on board, reminds us of Charles Darwin's journey to the Southern American seas aboard the *Beagle*. So crisis turned into a great opportunity for the young nation to join in the network of treaties by which Western powers were binding the declining Tokugawa dynasty.

The 1866 *Magenta* expedition – together with the scientific-diplomatic mission to Persia promoted by the Italian government in 1862 but conceived by Cavour as early as 1860[50]

[46] On this subject see the seminal work by S. Patriarca, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

[47] See Fulvio Cammarano's article in this special issue.

[48] A. Caffarelli, *Il leone ferito. Venezia, l'Adriatico e la navigazione sussidiata per le Indie e l'Estremo Oriente (1866-1914)*, Roma, Viella, 2014.

[49] J. Ostrehammel, *Gerarchie e relazioni*, cit., p. 903.

[50] Among the 19 members of the 1862 mission were Filippo De Filippi and Michele Lessona, zoologists who contributed to the diffusion of Darwin's theories in Italy. Lessona was also asked by the Italian government, led by general Federico Menabrea, to write an Italian version of Samuel Smiles' *Self Help*, which he published in 1869: under the meaningful title *Volere è potere*, it sang the praises of Italian self-made men whose courage and skills would make Italy pass beyond the Risorgimento phase and enter a new era of entrepreneurship and greatness on an international scale.

–, document the ruling class's interest in geographical areas beyond the usual horizon of the Peninsula: the post-Risorgimento phase would therefore be punctuated by State building on a daily basis, but also by the quest for a place in the realms of science and commerce, torn by the enduring dilemma between «a politics of greatness and a politics of tranquillity»[51].

Global Risorgimento, and Beyond

The passages briefly analysed for their relevance to the history of an Italian Peninsula taking part in European, Mediterranean and transoceanic dynamics 1850-1870, bear out the fact that the young nation was affected by the main currents of the technological and cultural transformation occurring during the mid-19th century. Individuals, interest groups, and politicians were well aware of the disruptive changes brought by the Crimean war, by the transport and communication revolution and, finally, by the Prussian-French clash of 1870[52]. In the shrinking of the world soon to come, Italy in the making – a kind of late-comer apparently engrossed in her Mediterranean horizon –, breathed life into influences, ideas and tensions which can be considered of global import: among them, the divide between a progressive North and a conservative South, flows of economic, if no longer political, migration, and participation in commercial and technological enterprises such as the excavation of the Suez Canal and commercial-diplomatic expeditions.

Yet a further player can be added to the framework of a «global» Risorgimento. As I myself tried to document a few years ago, what Bayly called «the great inter-regional shock dividing the 19th Century»[53] – the American Civil War – deeply influenced the international vision of some European thinkers, Giuseppe Mazzini among them[54]. Overcoming his prejudice against federalism, which belonged to his Risorgimento-in-the-making phase, in the mid-1860s Mazzini viewed the slavery-free United States with new eyes: the bulwark of republicanism, even more so once Napoleon III's Mexican adventure had brought the challenge and the nightmare of Caesarism across the Atlantic from Europe. The «holy battle» against despotism thus acquired a totally unprecedented geopolitical-transnational dimension, as Mazzini's letter to the evangelical minister Moncure Daniel Conway testifies[55]. That a powerful new cosmopolitanism had entered Mazzinian thought is shown in a selection of writings and a collective volume edited by Recchia and Urbinati and by Bayly and Biagini respectively[56]. Though the American democratic establi-

[51] F. Chabod, *Storia della politica estera italiana*, cit., part II.

[52] *Ibidem*, part I.

[53] C.A. Bayly, *Nascita del mondo moderno, 1780-1914*, Torino, Einaudi, 2007 (or. ed.: *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2004), pp. 161-164.

[54] A. Arisi Rota, World History, *società internazionale e Ottocento: la prospettiva di Mazzini*, «Memoria e ricerca», 43 (2013), pp. 127-143.

[55] G. Mazzini, *Intorno alla questione dei negri in America*, in *Scritti politici*, ed. by T. Grandi, A. Comba, Torino, Utet, 1972 (new edition by M. Viroli, Torino, Utet, 2005), p. 974.

[56] S. Recchia, N. Urbinati (eds.), *A Cosmopolitanism of Nations: Giuseppe Mazzini's Writings on Democracy, Nation Building and International Relations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009; C.A. Bayly, E.F. Biagini (eds.), *Mazzini and the Globalisation of Democratic Nationalism 1830-1920*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.

shment did not meet Mazzini's expectations for cooperation (in spite of Polish activist Bulewski's successful mission to New York in September 1866), he launched a new project, the *Alleanza Repubblicana Universale*, a global brotherhood of workers which he pledged to the destruction of monarchies, starting with the Savoy dynasty in Italy[57].

Further investigation would be welcome from the perspective of international networks of intellectual history in the Italian 1850-1870 period. And yet, some other promising directions of research are worth mentioning in the closing lines of this article. The post-1848 decades in Italian history will certainly benefit from Catherine Brice and her research fellows' original approach to international mobility in the light of exchanges of know-how and expertise, as well as technological inventions and innovations: the issue of the «Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle» devoted to *Mobilités, savoir-faire, innovations*, directed by Brice and Diaz[58], and the special issue of «Diasporas. Circulations, migrations, histoire» dedicated to *Mobilités créatrices*[59], offer an unconventional point of view from which to investigate what we might term the 'post-political exile' phase. Again, if we move on to the decades of repression producing flows of exiles from the Peninsula, the study of political deportation and of political prisoners that Elena Bacchin is currently working on[60] seems promising in so far as their destinations and status once they landed in Northern, Southern and Central America sheds light on a less-investigated dimension of 'global Risorgimento» and colonial engineering. Moreover, if we think of deportation as connected not just to material and identity loss, but also to mobility, expertise and innovation, we find evidence of the global reach of the Risorgimento, spanning the shores of the Atlantic for long decades. One among many, the life of Luigi Tinelli (1799-1873) began with entrepreneurial attitudes in post-Napoleonic Lombardy, and went on to embrace conspiracy in Mazzini's underground network. Prison, trial, condemnation and confinement at the Spielberg fortress —commuted under the 1836 amnesty to deportation for life to the United States —provided Tinelli with a painful challenge: he managed to re-invent himself as a lecturer on agricultural modernization and mulberry growing, was then appointed US consul to Oporto, Portugal and, later, back in the States and with his American citizenship granted, joined the Northern cause and fought during the Civil War as an officer in the Garibaldi Guards, a regiment made up of Italian volunteers. Tinelli's is a truly «global life»[61] that documents the wider scenario in which conspiracy, deportation, war and

[57] G. Mazzini, *Alleanza Repubblicana* (1866), in *Scritti politici*, cit., p. 999.

[58] C. Brice, D. Diaz (eds.), *Mobilités, savoir-faire et innovations*, «Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle», 53, 2 (2016), pp. 9-116. For a general overview see P. Burke, *Exiles and Expatriates in the History of Knowledge, 1500-2000*, Waltham, Brandies University Press, 2017, in particular ch. 5 on Italian exiles.

[59] C. Brice (ed.), *Mobilités créatrices*, special issue of «Diasporas. Circulations, migrations, histoire», 2 (2017).

[60] Currently endowed with a Marie Curie scholarship at Columbia University, NY, Bacchin presented the first outcomes of her research project in the aforementioned workshop of May 2018 in Salerno (*Prigioni e prigionieri politici. Dinamiche transnazionali del Risorgimento italiano*) and at the September 2019 Cantieri Sissco conference in Modena (*Colonie penali. Ingegneria sociale in territori stranieri*), as well as at a seminar held at Ca' Foscari, Venice, in November 2019. See now E. Bacchin, *Political Prisoners of the Italian Mezzogiorno: A Transnational Question of the Nineteenth Century*, «European History Quarterly», 50 (2020), pp. 625-649.

[61] A. Arisi Rota, *Tinelli Luigi*, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. 95, 2019, online version: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/luigi-tinelli_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/.

modernization all internationalized nearly two generations of Italians and shaped many faces of a global Risorgimento that are still waiting to be fully explored.

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